

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 122164
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O R 262135Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA
AMCONSUL MAZATLAN

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJECT: PRESS ARTICLE ON CONSOFFS AND ARREST CASES

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN PROVIDED ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS WITH
FOLLOWING JACK ANDERSON ARTICLE TO BE PUBLISHED WASHINGTON
POST, SUNDAY, MAY 29, 1977. TEXT FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND, SUNDAY, MAY 29, 1977,
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FROM UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE BY JACK ANDERSON.

WASHINGTON -- THERE WAS A TIME WHEN AMERICANS WHO TRAVELED
ABROAD COULD COUNT UPON THE PROTECTION OF THEIR GOVERN-
MENT. TODAY, ALMOST ANY FOREIGN POTENTATE CAN DRAG THEM
OFF TO HIS TORTURE CHAMBERS AND PIG-STY PRISONS, WITHOUT
A WORRY ABOUT RETALIATION.

FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S CRUSADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DOESN'T SEEM TO APPLY TO THE 2200 AMERICANS WHO ARE SERVING TIME IN DISMAL, DINGY PRISONS FROM BANGKOK TO BOGOTA. THEIR RIGHTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTED BY THE CONSULAR OFFICERS, WHO ARE ATTACHED TO U.S. EMBASSIES AROUND THE WORLD.

IT IS THE THEORY OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SUPPOSED TO SERVE THE INDIVIDUAL. THIS PRINCIPLE IS SET FORTH IN NOBLE LANGUAGE, SUITABLE FOR FRAMING, IN THE CONSULAR OFFICERS' OFFICIAL HANDBOOK. THEY ARE ALSO REMINDED THAT "NEITHER ARREST NOR CONVICTION DEPRIVES A UNITED STATES NATIONAL OF THE RIGHT TO THE CONSUL'S BEST EFFORTS."

THE CONSULAR OFFICERS ARE SWORN TO LOOK AFTER THE CITIZENS "WELFARE AND DEFENSE," TO PROTECT HIS "LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS." DECLARES THE HANDBOOK: "LIKE ATTORNEYS AND SOCIAL WORKERS, CONSULAR OFFICERS ARE OBLIGATED TO SERVE THEIR CLIENTS WITH DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL ENTHUSIASM REGARDLESS OF THEIR OWN OPINIONS OF THE CLIENT'S INNOCENCE OR PERSONAL MERIT."

THAT'S WHAT THE TEXTBOOK SAYS. IN PRACTICE, MANY CONSULAR OFFICIALS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THEIR COZY RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR HOSTS, INCLUDING DICTATORS AND DESPOTS, THAN IN UPHOLDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. AMERICANS WHO FALL INTO THE CLUTCHES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGN POLICE HAVE LEARNED, UNHAPPILY, TO EXPECT NO MORE THAN A POLITE MURMUR OF PROTEST FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

THE AMERICANS WHO TAKE THE WORST ABUSE IN FOREIGN JAILS ARE YOUNG DRUG OFFENDERS, MANY OF WHOM WERE CAUGHT WITH NO MORE THAN A FEW PINCHES OF MARIJUANA. OTHERS WERE ARRESTED FOR MERELY ATTENDING PARTIES WHERE POT WAS SMOKED, ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT PARTAKE THEMSELVES.

THEY ARE IN PRISON BECAUSE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT, IN ITS ZEAL TO HALT WORLD-WIDE DRUG TRAFFIC, BROUGHT TREMENDOUS PRESSURE ON VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS TO CRACK DOWN ON DRUG VIOLATORS. THE DRAGNET, UNFORTUNATELY, CAUGHT FEW SMUGGLERS BUT MANY USERS.

WE HAVE INTERVIEWED DOZENS OF THESE YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS AND THEIR PARENTS. WE HAVE HEARD TALE AFTER TALE, SINCERELY RENDERED, OF THE DENIAL OF BASIC RIGHTS -- BEATINGS, THREATS, EXTORTION AND EXPROPRIATION OF PER-

SONAL PROPERTY. IN MANY COUNTRIES THE AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICERS HAVE BEEN ONLY GRUDGINGLY COOPERATIVE; SOME HAVE EVEN SIDED WITH THE TORMENTORS AGAINST THE IMPRISONED AMERICANS.

ON JANUARY 1, WE TURNED THE SPOTLIGHT ON THREE DOZEN AMERICAN PRISONERS WHO WERE CONFINED IN BLEAK BOLIVIAN JAILS. SEVERAL SWORE THEY WERE GUILTY OF NO MORE THAN MINOR MISDEMEANORS OR WERE INNOCENT ALTOGETHER. THEY SOUGHT THE PROTECTION OF THE U.S. EMBASSY BUT GOT THE BRUSH-OFF FROM A CONSULAR OFFICER NAMED EDWARD MILBURN.

THE PARENTS APPEALED TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN WHO WROTE A JOINT LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE. "WHAT IS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN..." THEY COMPLAINED "IS THE APPARENT FAILURE OF OUR EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO TAKE ACTION OR DISPLAY MUCH SYMPATHY -- ON BEHALF OF THESE PRISONERS." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALL TOO TYPICAL IS THE ATTITUDE OF RICHARD SCHENCK, THE U.S. CONSUL IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA, WHO COMPLAINED TO US ABOUT OUR COLUMN IN SUPPORT OF THE INCARCERATED AMERICANS IN BOLIVIA. "I AM RATHER TIRED," HE WROTE ON EMBASSY STATIONERY, "OF THE CURRENT 'MAMBY-PAMBY' SOLICITUDE FOR THESE (DRUG) USERS AND TRAFFICKERS. THEY ARE NOT ALL HARDENED CRIMINALS, BUT ALMOST ALL ARE DROPOUTS AND NON-CONTRIBUTORS LOOKING FOR CHEAP JUNK."

THIS SAME SCHENCK, INCIDENTALLY, IS EMPLOYED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS IN VENEZUELA. A DOZEN AMERICANS IN VENEZUELAN JAILS MUST DEPEND UPON HIM FOR RELIEF.

THE AMERICAN CONSUL IN CHILE, FRED PURDY, SECURED THE RELEASE OF AMY CONGER, AN AMERICAN ART TEACHER, AFTER SHE HAD BEEN BADLY ABUSED AND MOLESTED BY MILITARY POLICE. HER RELEASE WAS HANDLED QUIETLY, WITHOUT A WORD OF PROTEST FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT. WHEN WE FINALLY PUBLISHED HER STORY, PURDY SPOKE UP IN SUPPORT NOT OF AMY CONGER BUT OF HER CHILEAN TORTURERS.

IN CONTRAST, WHEN A BRITISH NATIONAL, DR. SHEILA CASSIDY, WAS ABUSED BY CHILEAN OFFICIALS, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SECURED HER RELEASE, WITHDREW ITS AMBASSADOR FROM CHILE AND ISSUED A STINGING STATEMENT.

IN BOLIVIA, BRITISH CONSUL BRIAN BARRETT ALWAYS APPEARS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ARREST OF A FELLOW COUNTRYMAN. HE USUALLY SUCCEEDS IN ARRANGING TO HAVE THE BRITISH CITIZEN

DEPORTED RATHER THAN LEFT TO ROT IN BOLIVIAN JAILS.

IN THAILAND, ACCORDING TO A LETTER FROM AMERICAN PRISONERS,
AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER ROBERT JACOBS VISITED THEIR
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BUT MANY CONSULAR OFFICERS, INFORTUNATELY, SEEM TO HAVE
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DRAFTED BY: SCA:SHORSEY

APPROVED BY: SCA:RTHENEMEYER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING IS REPEAT STATE 122164, SENT CARACAS, SANTIAGO,
LA PAZ, BANGKOK, INFO MEXICO, GUADALAJARA, MAZATLAN 26 MAY:

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 26-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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To: CARACAS SANTIAGO MULTIPLE
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